

REMARKS

By this Reply, claims 33, 39-41, 44, 48, 49, 54, 59, and 62 have been amended; and claims 38, 46, and 47 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Accordingly, claims 33-37, 39-45, and 48-64 are currently pending in this application. The amended claims are fully supported by the application as originally filed, and thus no new matter has been introduced by this Reply.

In the Office Action, claims 33-37, 44-46, 48, 57, and 61-64 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,863,780 to Gottlieb et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,474,487 to Kretschmer, U.S. Patent No. 5,222,448 to Morgenthaler et al., and U.S. Patent No. 3,700,117 to Corley; and claims 38-43, 47, 49-56, and 58-60 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated as including allowable subject matter. Applicant gratefully acknowledges the indication of allowable subject matter.

For the sole purpose of expediting prosecution, independent claim 33 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 38, and independent claim 44 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 46 and 47. The Office Action indicated that claims 38 and 47 include allowable subject matter. Accordingly, independent claims 33 and 44 are in condition for allowance.

Claims 34-37, 39-43, 45, and 48-64 are also in condition for allowance, at least due to their dependence from allowable claims 33 and 44. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 33-37, 44, 45, 48, 57, and 61-64 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and the objection to claims 39-43, 49-56, and 58-60 are now moot.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

The Office Action contains characterizations of the claims and the related art with which Applicant does not necessarily agree. Unless expressly noted otherwise, Applicant declines to subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

In discussing the specification, claims, and drawings in this Reply, it is to be understood that Applicant is in no way intending to limit the scope of the claims to an exemplary embodiment described in the specification or abstract and/or shown in the drawings. Rather, Applicant is entitled to have the claims interpreted broadly, to the maximum extent permitted by statute, regulation, and applicable case law.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant submits that this claimed invention is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicant therefore requests the reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conversation might advance prosecution, the Examiner is invited to call Applicant's undersigned representative at 202-408-4129.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge
any additional required fees to Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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